Coconut plantations in Tamil Nadu

3042. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that vast areas of coconut plantations in Tamil Nadu were affected due to various reasons;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the areas of cocunut plantations in the State have shrunk due to low returns;

(c) the areas covered under coconut plantations in the State during the last five years; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to boost coconut growing in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. Coconut plantations in Tamil Nadu were affected due to various reasons *viz.* drought, incidence of pests and diseases like Eriophyid mite, Root wilt and Leaf eating caterpillar, etc.

(b) As per the estimate released by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of India, the coconut plantations have not shown any reduction in area.

(c) The area covered under coconut plantations in the State during last 5 years is given below.

Years	Area in '000 ha
2000-01	323.6
2001-02	335.8
2002-03	345.9
2003-04	352.7
2004-05	357.1

(d) The Coconut Development Board is implementing various development programmes to boost coconut growing in the country. The programmes implemented are enclosed as per Statement.

Statement

Development Programmes of Coconut Development Board

I. Integrated farming in coconut for productivity improvement:

The objective of the programme is to improve production and productivity of the coconut holdings through an integrated approach and thereby increasing the net income from unit holdings with the following components.

(a) Management of disease affected palms

An amount of Rs. 250/- per palm is provided as an incentive for rremoval of disease advanced palms.

(b) Laying out of Demonstration Plots

Financial assistance of Rs. 35,000 per ha in two annual instalments is provided for adoption of Integrated management practices for increasing the productivity of disease affected gardens.

(c) Assistance for organic manure units

In order to promote the use of organic manures like vermin compost, coir pith compost, in the coconut holdings financial assistance of Rs. 20,000/= per unit is provided.

II. Production and distribution of planting material:

(a) Establishment of Demonstration cum seed production Farms

Nine Demonstration-cum Seed Production Farms have been established in various coconut growing states for production and distribution of genetically superior planting materials and to demonstrate the farmers the scientific coconut cultivation.

(b) Establishment of Regional Coconut Nursery

Under the scheme, the expenditure is shared on 50:50 basis by Board and implementing States for setting up of Regional Coconut Nurseries.

(c) Production and distribution of hybrids and local cultivars

The scheme for the production and distribution of quality planting material of hybrids and local cultivars is implemented through various State Agri./Hort. Depts. on 50:50 basis.

(d) Aid to registered/private/approved coconut nurseries.

Board is providing financial assistance @Rs.6 lakhs for seed garden (big unit) and Rs. 2 lakh for coconut nursery (small unit) for promoting quality seedling production in the private sector.

III. Expansion of Area under Coconut:

Under this programme incentive subsidy is extended to small and marginal farmers to take up new planting/under planting of coconut @ Rs. 8000 per ha in wo annual instalments.

IV. Technology Mission on Coconut:

Productivity improvement through management of pest and diseases, product diversification and Market promotion are the main objectives of Technology Mission. So far, 28 projects have been sanctioned.

Availability of agricultural land

3043. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that availability of agricultural land has shrunk due to construction of houses and buildings over the years;

(b) the area under cultivation during the last three years, State-wise;

(c) whether the sale of land is due to the remunerative price it fetches as compared to the return from the agricultural produce particularly for lower and middle level farmers;

(d) if so, the steps taken to ban sale of agricultural land for other purposes; and

(e) the land distributed to landless labourers during the last three years in different States/UTs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) As per latest Land Use Statistics, the total agricultural land in the country had fluctuated between 183.4 million hectares in the year 2003-04 and 183.0 million hectares in 2000-01.

(b) State-wise areas under cultivation during the three years (2001-02 to 2003-04) are given in the enclosed statement-I (*See* below)